"I GET BLANK WHEN START TALKING": AN EXPLORATION TOWARDS SOURCES AND STRATEGIES OF NON-ENGLISH FRESHMEN'S ANXIETY IN ESP SPEAKING PROGRAM

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Abstract: Foreign language anxiety has been recognized as one of the foremost challenges for language learners. This study intends to explore the sources of non-English freshmen's anxiety in ESP speaking program and their ways of dealing with it. Similarly, ESP instructors' solutions to mitigate their freshmen's anxiety were also discovered. A qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design was conducted to enrich insight and better understand the phenomenon. Data collection involves classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with eight non-English freshmen and two ESP instructors enrolled in ESP speaking program at a private university in Malang, East Java. The data was then analyzed thematically using the interactive model of Miles et al., (2014). It was found that speaking anxiety commonly felt by non-English freshmen was caused by some sources from freshmen's personal mentality, linguistic capability, and classroom activity. The finding also provides several strategies adopted by freshmen to overcome their anxiety. Furthermore, various approaches implemented by ESP instructors to decrease freshmen's speaking anxiety were offered. It should be emphasized that anxiety among students will always linger upon learning a foreign language. Still, such learning roadblocks could be diminished. Instructors possess a crucial duty to lessen the worries of learners.
Keywords: *ESP program; foreign language anxiety; non-English freshmen; sources and strategies;*

INTRODUCTION
The academic literature regarding second language acquisition (SLA) reveals that scholars remain keen on understanding the affective factors of second language learning over the years. Among these factors, the emotional aspect, namely foreign language anxiety (FLA), has been identified as a critical challenge for language learners (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1991; Macintyre & Gardner, 1994; Hanifa, 2018; Inada, 2021). Anxiety appears as a significant aspect impeding learners' performance. According to Krashen, as cited in Oteir & Al-Otaibi (2019), the presence of anxiety about a foreign language can prevent information from being absorbed by the

brain's language acquisition area. Horwitz et al., (1986) define foreign language anxiety as a complex concept encompassing an individual's self-perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and emotions associated with learning a new language in a classroom setting. This anxiety is believed to arise from the distinctive nature of the language-learning process. Similarly, Macintyre & Gardner (1994) describe language anxiety as an emotional response characterized by stress, nervousness, and worry linked to learning a second or foreign language. Young (1991) state that the growing number of anxious language learners in foreign language classes is causing concern. An anxious language learner sees

learning a foreign language as an unpleasant experience, frequently retreats from involvement in class, is under stress to avoid making errors, and does not feel motivated to pursue it (Naibaho, 2022).

To gain a broader insight into foreign language anxiety, the aspect of anxiety, in general, should be understood. Psychologically, anxiety has been classified into three categories: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situational anxiety (Spielberger in Horwitz et al., 1986). The trait type happens when an individual tends to be anxious permanently. The state occurs whenever someone perceives a condition as personally harmful. In comparison, situational anxiety develops at certain moments due to a specific situation (Oteir & & Al-Otaibi, 2019). In an EFL setting, FLA is regarded as a type of situational anxiety that occurs in a foreign language classroom. Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986) identified three aspects of classroom anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Worrying about engaging verbally with others is linked to communication apprehension; worrying about getting negative criticism correlates with fear of negative evaluation. Test anxiety emerges due to students' nervousness and tension when confronted with a language test (Alfiani et al., 2022). In addition, language anxiety is distinguished into two distinct types: debilitating and facilitating (Subekti, 2018). She further explains that debilitating anxiety decreases learners' performance and has an adverse impact, whereas facilitating anxiety increases learners' performance and helps them do well in the language in a certain way. It indicates that anxiety has a greater significance than just a weakening influence. Low levels of anxiety are acceptable and essential for raising cognition. On the other hand, high anxiety contributes to the deterioration of achievement (Yoskapela et al., 2022).

Although anxiety has been correlated to several language skills, speaking output is regarded as the leading source of anxiety in EFL classrooms due to students' fear of communicating publicly with a language they do not master completely (Hanifa, 2018). Young (1991) expresses that while all components of studying and comprehending a language could be unpleasant, speaking is the skill that most frequently causes anxiety. It erodes students' confidence, self-worth, and desire to participate in class. According to Rajitha & Alamelu (2020), many possible factors might induce speaking anxiety, including language, grammar and pronunciation, peer pressure, stage fright, and shyness. Another challenge is that the EFL classroom is the only opportunity for students to learn and practice English speaking seriously (Yoskapela et al., 2022).

English is the medium of instruction in an EFL classroom, where students carry out the language for academic purposes. For instance, they use English to give oral presentations and engage in class discussions. As a result, these circumstances can naturally trigger their fear of speaking. Taly & Paramasivam (2020) explain that speaking anxiety interferes with cognitive, physical, and behavioral functions. All are interconnected; whenever a student is stressed about attempting to speak in class (cognitive), she or he temporarily exhibit unpleasant symptom, namely trembling (physical) and avoiding partaking in speaking performance (behavioral). All anxiousness reaction is strictly linked to learning speaking for ESL and EFL students. The fundamental question about this issue is, what are the contributing sources, and how do we solve speaking anxiety?

Several researchers have begun identifying the causes and various underlying aspects correlated to EFL speaking anxiety. Alzamil (2022) investigates Saudi university students' beliefs about speaking and anxiety. Concern about making mistakes when presenting and being criticized by others were causes that obstructed their English speaking. Asysyifa et al. (2019) explore the speaking anxiety of first-year vocational high school students. It reveals that unpreparedness, afraid of errors and ridicule by peers, also difficulties with spelling and articulating are the condition that causes students' emotional distress. Zheng & Cheng (2018) examine the correlation among Chinese university students' foreign language anxiety in the classroom, cognitive tests, and college English test bands. According to the findings, many undergraduates did not consider themselves anxious in university settings. However, they expressed anxiety about their speaking abilities during the language class and exams. Ozdemir & Papi (2022) study the mindsets of L2 learners as possible sources of anxiety and self-confidence. They discovered that the L2 fixed mindset (the perception that L2 acquisition competence cannot evolve) strongly predicted speaking

anxiety. Conversely, the L2 growth mindset (the belief that L2 acquisition competence can evolve) significantly predicted speaking self-confidence. Tekir (2021) analyze Turkish EFL learners' reasons for their speaking anxiety. The outcome demonstrates the negative prior experience, fear of criticism, limited speaking opportunities, and social pressure as the elements influencing anxiety.

As a result of this focus on speaking anxiety, researchers have figured out how to treat and reduce the condition. Inada (2021) argues that students perform better and acquire more information once their anxiety rates are low. Similarly, Toyama & Yamazaki (2021) suggest that minimizing students' FLA and nurturing low-anxiety settings are pivotal to improving their language ability. Burden in Ozturk & Ozturk (2021) expresses that inviting students to share their thought on a particular topic they were familiar with, emphasizing content over structure, and providing constructive feedback rather than declaring "that is incorrect" helped relieve students' anxiety while speaking. Arifin (2017) mentions several strategies teachers can use to alleviate students' speaking anxiety, such as creating cooperative learning activities and giving students specific roles in the classroom that initiate interactions among them.

Moreover, anxiety is also related to some characteristics that teachers exhibit. According to Maquidato's (2021) research, when kind and warm teachers teach students, they feel less anxious. In contrast, when students perceive their teachers to be antagonistic, they become anxious, restricting their opportunities for interaction. Paliath et al., (2023) assert that teachers play a vital role in preventing anxiety by striving to make the classroom a comfortable and less stress-producing place for learning. They should create an atmosphere where errors made while learning a language should be accepted and welcomed as learning opportunities. Ansari (2015) adds that teachers should never compare their students, embarrass them, pressure them to speak, or show no respect. Besides, they must consider a suitable manner when addressing students' mistakes.

Active participation in the target language session is an efficient method for mastering the language. Ironically, speaking in a foreign language class causes intense anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1991). The role of EFL teachers is to guide students in improving their target language by providing exciting activities

that encourage them to speak it. Nonetheless, students typically do not view practicing the language as a valuable learning opportunity; they presume certain practices might heighten their anxiety (Rafada & Madini, 2017). In this case, students consider oral language practice as a tough situation that challenges their capabilities and is associated with unwelcome emotions. A teacher should recognize that language learning can be nerve-wracking for several students and that they may worry about receiving negative feedback from teachers or peers. Richards (2022) declared that students who fear negative self-views long for positive praise and reinforcement. He further proposes that teachers should take control to assist anxious students in seeing their surroundings as non-competitive. They can create pair or group work speaking activities to foster a favorable and less intimidating atmosphere for learning since students can engage in a small circle of speaking practice.

With a glance at the existing literature, little empirical study has been undertaken to explore speaking anxiety problems in higher education's English for Specific Purpose (ESP) setting. To fill this void, the current exploratory study offers insight from freshmen and instructors enrolled in ESP speaking program at a private university in Malang, East Java. Unlike typical EFL classes, the ESP program uses a broader range of language registers, such as English for Business, Medicine, Engineering, and Tourism. One of the primary concerns about the ESP program is that the students are not English majors. Hence, they generally tend to have less exposure to English learning.

The first year of college is a difficult adjustment time. Freshmen must fulfill the prerequisites for their academic programs and adapt to a new social life. The feeling of anxiety is prevalent among non-English freshmen in the ESP program since the English language is studied as a foreign language. ESP is taught following each department's field of study and is targeted at enhancing freshmen's English-speaking capacity to prepare for future employment. Thus, freshmen got the ESP program as a supplementary course. Nevertheless, non-English freshmen study English because it is a required academic course, not as if they enjoy it. As a result, the dynamics of their speaking anxiety is predicted to be more complex in this context.

Additionally, ESP instructors are involved as the participants in this study, as the previous

study had predominantly focused on learners. Obtaining ESP instructors' views of their freshmen's speaking anxiety became far-reaching. Both parties should enhance their awareness and mastery of the strategies concerning anxiety management. The discoveries from this study are intended to provide input and reference for ESP educators striving to seek more enlightening and fulfilling activities to lessen non-English university students' anxiety during language learning.

This study, therefore, attempted to answer two research questions. First, what perceived sources affect non-English freshmen's anxiety in the ESP speaking program? Second, how do the strategies undertake by non-English freshmen and instructors regarding freshmen's anxiety in the ESP speaking program?

METHOD
This study applied a qualitative approach to fully comprehend freshmen's and instructors' perceptions of language anxiety in the ESP speaking program and their solutions for overcoming this problem. Qualitative research is focused on uncovering societal issues from the angle of those involved in the study; it allows the researcher to acknowledge the internal background of subjective human feelings and view things from their perspective (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, an exploratory case study was adopted for the experiences analyzed. Yin, (2018) believes an exploratory case study explores a situation where the evaluated intervention has no clear, single outcomes.

Before conducting this qualitative study, the researchers had already administered a foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCAS) questionnaire adapted from Horwitz et al., (1986) to two non-English classes based on the ESP instructors' recommendation of the class which seriously suffer from English-speaking anxiety. They were freshmen in the industrial engineering and food science technology department at a private university in Malang, East Java, for the academic year 2022/2023, who took the ESP program, which consisted of 48 freshmen. The intention was to know the level of anxiety encountered by the freshmen. At the end of the questionnaire section, the researchers asked if they were willing to be interviewed further related to speaking anxiety issues and how to face it; then provided yes and no options. 15

respondents agreed to be interviewed. However, the researchers only recruited 8 non-English freshmen who experienced high and moderate anxiety levels (according to the questionnaire results), comprised of 4 females and 4 males. All the freshmen were in the age range of 18-21.

After the selected participants were eager to contribute to the study, the interviewer contacted them to explain the study's aims, give a consent form, and make an appointment to interview each participant. Moreover, two ESP instructors were also voluntarily willing to be interviewed further regarding their role in alleviating freshmen's anxiety. They were considered capable of providing their understanding and view about this study issue since they had been teaching ESP speaking at the various non-English major for four years. Considering all participants were fluent in Indonesian, the interviews were conducted in that language to ensure that no language barrier prevented them from sharing their in-depth experiences. It was also to guarantee that everything was understood. Detailed information about this study's participants is in Tables 1 and 2. They were coded as freshmen 1, 2, 3, and so forth, also instructors A and B to maintain participant anonymity.

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of the interviewed freshmen*

Code	Sex	Age	Major
Freshman 1	Female	19	Food Science and Technology
Freshman 2	Male	21	Food Science and Technology
Freshman 3	Female	18	Food Science and Technology
Freshman 4	Female	19	Food Science and Technology
Freshman 5	Male	19	Industrial Engineering
Freshman 6	Female	18	Industrial Engineering
Freshman 7	Male	19	Industrial Engineering
Freshman 8	Male	20	Industrial Engineering

Table 2. *Demographic characteristics of the interviewed ESP instructors*

Character	Instructor A	Instructor B
Sex	Female	Female
Age	27	29
Educational Background	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree

Teaching ESP		
Experience	4 years	4 years

In order to dig deep into freshmen's and instructors' behaviors towards English-speaking activity, the researcher conducted classroom observations to witness the live activity and interaction of the participants. Four observation sessions occurred over semester 1 (specifically on October 2022, 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th). It involved the whole class activity of 100 minutes of each meeting. The researchers have gained permission from participants to use all the information provided for research and academic publication, manifested in the consent form as research ethics.

After all the interviews and observations, the gathered data were fully transcribed and translated into English, then analyzed thematically using an interactive data analysis model based on Miles et al., (2014). It includes data condensing, display, conclusion, and verifying each process stage. Data condensing is the process of arranging raw data and analyzing acquired information. In the data display process, the researchers classify the data using several themes and descriptions to represent the data condition. Finally, review, revise, and double-check the themes to arrive at a valid conclusion and consider the research implication. Some irrelevant data will be eliminated to focus more on answering the research problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Numerous studies have emphasized the enervating impact of anxiety on foreign language learning, a problem that students should conquer in order to gain the maximum benefit of L2 acquisition (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1991; Macintyre & Gardner, 1994; Liu, 2018; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021; Alfiani, 2022). Thereby, the primary intention of this exploratory study was to discover the potential sources that lead to freshmen's anxiety when trying to speak English and their solutions to cope with it accordingly. The results and discussion contain the interpretations of the research findings and their significance, and then compared with some related previous studies.

The perceived sources that affect non-English freshmen's anxiety in ESP speaking program
Based on the qualitative data that was analyzed thematically, the researchers found key themes concerning the sources that affect freshmen's speaking anxiety throughout interviews and observations; it is categorized into three aspects, namely: (1) anxiety against personal mentality, including low self-esteem, nervousness, and beliefs about language learning (2) anxiety against linguistic capability, such as lack of vocabulary input and fear of pronunciation and word usage (3) anxiety against classroom activity, which involve fear of presentation and fear of negative evaluation. However, each participant was experiencing different sources of anxiety and not identical to one another. The detailed results of the analysis are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. *Sources of speaking anxiety*

Name	Aspect						
	Personal Mentality			Linguistic Capability		Classroom Activity	
	Low self-esteem	Nervous	Beliefs about language learning	Lack of vocabulary input	Fear of pronunciation and word usage	Fear of presentation	Fear of negative evaluation
Freshman 1	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	-
Freshman 2	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Freshman 3	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓
Freshman 4	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-
Freshman 5	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Freshman 6	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Freshman 7	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Freshman 8	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-

Theme 1: Anxiety against personal mentality (low self-esteem, nervousness, and beliefs about language learning)
Low self-esteem

Going up to speak in a non-native language can be excessively intimidating for non-English freshmen. Some exhibited low self-esteem and tended to doubt whether they could speak

English. They think of themselves as incapable and incompetent. As conveyed in the interview,

> "I am afraid if my classmates think about how this one performs, why her accent is like that." (Freshman 6)

> "When it comes to speaking class, there is a fear inside me… how if I speak complicated sentences later." (Freshman 8)

As expressed, they often fear their language ability because they think it is not good enough. Moreover, freshmen 1 and 3 are trapped in the inferior feeling and feel less than others,

> "Sometimes, I also feel inferior towards a friend whose speaking is already good." (Freshman 1)

> "Seeing my friends who speak English more fluently makes me insecure; I am afraid of being laughed at." (Freshman 3)

Low self-esteem is among the personality dimensions that strongly resonate with anxiety, including self-judgments and individual intrinsic worth and value identity. Zakiya et al. (2022) study revealed that past experience and lack of self-confidence were causes of low self-esteem. The students were anxious to practice English speaking with their friends who had high English competence because they thought their English ability was not good enough. Furthermore, Hussain et al., (2021) spotted that learners measure their own success against their college, often leading to unhealthy competition or resentment. Students who perceive themselves as having mediocre academic abilities compared to their peers may experience a negative self-image, potentially resulting in language anxiety (Fitriah & Muna, 2019; Rahmi & Murtafi'ah, 2022).

Nervousness
Nervousness is a normal response to a stressful situation. Some of the participants felt nervous when having to speak English to the entire class. From the observation, they often look down, lower their voices, tend to go blank, and speak too fast or slow. They also favor covering their face with a mask when speaking since wearing a face mask has become the nature of many people during and after the pandemic. Supported by the interview session, they shared,

> "My obstacle in speaking class is that I often get nervous." (Freshman 4)

> "Sometimes, when I have to do a presentation in front of the class and see my classmates… I get blank when I start talking." (Freshman 3)

> "When came forward in front of my classmates and instructor, I get nervous and feel like go blank." (Freshman 5)

The statements above indicate that it is challenging to formulate thoughts properly and react conveniently when nervous. Intense anxiety is the leading cause of failing to recall the information and ending up going blank; typically, someone encounters it amid an uncomfortable moment, such as performing a presentation. This result aligns with Maquidato's (2021) study that it is prevalent among language learners to experience nervousness as a mental obstacle, blocking them from remembering what they know and the thoughts they have before a spoken conversation. Students' nervousness ultimately limits their focus and capacity to form standpoints and explain what they have in mind, despite having many ideas. Even so, Hammad (2020) believes that increased English language practice has the potential to alleviate the anxiety that students may encounter when presenting in front of audiences.

Beliefs about language learning
Some of the freshmen also reported their difficult belief about foreign language learning which stems from language complexity and cultural background; they stated,

> "The English language is complex and difficult. We are not familiar with the vocabulary and not comfortable to articulate it." (Freshman 7)

> "I am Javanese, and I think that Javanese's tongue is quite difficult to convey English accent." (Freshman 8)

> "It is effortful to speak English as it is not our language." (Freshmen 5)

Freshman 7, 8, and 5 beliefs may influence their language learning behaviors and reactions. If a student thinks he or she is not a gifted speaker of English, they might become doubtful and reluctant when attempting to convey English words. To assert that nobody was naturally gifted

with the potential to acquire a foreign language, Lockey in Loan (2022) insists that learning is a matter of attitude instead of aptitude. Every student should pursue all tasks with eagerness and perseverance to become successful, particularly when learning a foreign language. They must never perceive themselves as incapable. They should hold an "I can do it" mentality, which significantly enhances their study quality.

Theme 2: Anxiety against linguistic capability (lack of vocabulary input, fear of pronunciation and word usage)
Lack of vocabulary input
After rounds of coding, the findings show that one of the dominant themes that emerged among notions voiced by the respondents was hesitating about their linguistic capability of English. Three of them traced their anxiety over speaking sessions to a vocabulary shortage; they expressed,

> "I often confuse what vocabulary to use… like I have to memorize it." (Freshman 1)

> "I am already a college student and still have limited vocabulary; I did not know the many words in English" (Freshman 4)

> "We are lacking in memorizing much vocabulary." (Freshman 8)

It could be deduced that non-English freshmen's limited vocabularies become the main reason they cannot express their ideas precisely in English, consequently inhibiting their English-speaking proficiency. Conversely, those who can express more vocabularies tend to have better speaking proficiency. Educators and researchers have perceived a lack of vocabulary knowledge as the essential building block in authentic communication (Hammad, 2020). Previous studies have also revealed that inadequate vocabularies cause language learners' speaking anxiety (Muthmainnah, 2018; Fitriah & Muna, 2019; Rahmi & Murtafi'ah, 2022). Considering autonomous vocabulary development is valuable for students, teachers should encourage them to build strategies for acquiring vocabulary, which includes guessing, looking up words in a dictionary, and memorizing (Hussain et al., 2021). Learners might be advised and pushed to cultivate these strategies in individual study time.

Fear of pronunciation and word usage
The fear of making mistakes over pronunciation and word usage appeared to significantly cause stress for most of the non-English freshmen in this study. Almost all of the interviewed participants shared,

> "If I want to talk about words that are unfamiliar, I am afraid of pronouncing them wrong." (Freshman 2)

> "I lack confidence when it comes to pronouncing words, doubting whether is this correct or not." (Freshman 5)

> "Sometimes, I hesitate to use the new words I have never heard before." (Freshman 7)
> "English words with consonants at the end are hard to say. As well as words that I have not heard before." (Freshman 3)

> "It is difficult to pronounce English words; I often make mistakes." (Freshman 4)

> "I fear of saying the wrong thing and fear of incorrect pronunciations." (Freshman 8)

The excerpt above indicates that pronunciation and the choice of word usage play a central role in producing correct utterances. Realizing how far the freshmen's pronunciation is from native models may make some even more anxious. This result coincided with the study of Alnahidh & Altahap (2020), who disclosed that the most frequent cause of speaking anxiety in their study is fear of making mistakes over words and pronunciation. The students felt that speaking exposed their mistakes and thought that other students would doubt their abilities if they made mistakes. Prior research also has demonstrated that linguistic fears, like fear of misusing words and poor pronunciation, are widespread among anxious learners (Young, 1991; Macintyre & Gardner, 1994; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). These learners tend to worry about avoiding making linguistic mistakes and setting unrealistic standards for foreign language learning. Furthermore, Liu (2018) explained that students must be taught that producing linguistic faults is a normal and inseparable aspect of acquiring a foreign language.

Theme 3: Anxiety against classroom activity (fear of presentation and fear of negative evaluation)
Fear of presentation
There are many presentations in college classes. The oral presentation has always been the most

challenging classroom activity since it is difficult for many freshmen to make public speeches, even in their native language, as they fear public speaking. Through critical observations, it was found that freshmen seemed to be anxious during their English-speaking presentation in front of the class. They were moving body parts repetitively, fixing the scarf, avoiding eye contact, often using filler words like eeee and ummm, and rushing the presentation. The sensation of being seen by many people in the class somehow influences their performance. When asked about what situation in ESP speaking class makes them most anxious, they answered,

> "I am most afraid when presentation time and when the instructor suddenly pointed out one of us to answer questions." (Freshman 1)

> "Probably before the presentation, I often get tense, especially when the instructor asks the material in detail… I am a bit surprise." (Freshman 2)

> "While presentation, although it is frequently in a group, still I get enormous tense when my part comes." (Freshman 4)

> "If I am about to give a presentation, I just worry if I say something confusing." (Freshman 6)

The above statements indicate that freshmen encountered fear of presentation during their classroom activity. Regarding presentation fear, the result was justified by Yi An et al. (2022), which pointed out that delivering an oral presentation is a student-centered activity, providing them with practical language tas that could help their continued personal and professional growth. Notwithstanding, students may face challenges while preparing and delivering presentations. These difficulties may be associated with the individual's linguistic proficiency, unease with public speaking, and fragile presentation skills, potentially resulting in unsuccessful outcomes (Soomro et al., 2019; Hammad, 2020). In addition, Grieve et al., (2021) suggest managing expectations away from a perfect presentation delivery. Instead, enhancing one's knowledge and comprehension of a topic issue might be a pivotal approach in mitigating the fear of giving presentations.

Fear of negative evaluation
The final prominent source of anxiety was the fear of negative evaluation. Freshmen are hypersensitive when their speaking performance is being corrected or evaluated by the instructor since it exposes their weaknesses publicly, contributing to anxiety and inferiority. They were also afraid that their peers would judge the way they spoke. Based on the interview data, they asserted,

> "When being corrected, particularly if it is in front of public… I get more embarrassed to speak English." (Freshman 2)

> "It frightened me a lot when the instructor started to evaluate my speaking performance after the presentation." (Freshman 3)

> "I am terrified if my way of speaking English would be judged badly." (Freshman 7)

> "Because I do not habitually speak English daily, I am really afraid of being judged wrongly for every word I speak." (Freshman 5)

> "There is a fear… how if my friends would judge the way I speak." (Freshman 6)

The above description denotes how respondents suffer from negative feelings towards others' evaluations. An exploratory reason why the fear of negative evaluation is high, as postulated by Horwitz et al. (1986), is mainly due to learners' uncertainties regarding what they have already spoken. To this point, they might assume that they appear foolish and sound ridiculous. This belief could turn into disappointment and frustration, provoking them to avoid speaking (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Moreover, Grieve et al., (2021) asserted that in oral exams, when speaking performance is evaluated and scored, learners' competence could become limited by a dread of "being judged." In order to cope with a fear of negative evaluation, less stressful learning situations are desirable. Educators must prevent correcting students on the spot during speaking periods since it might degrade their confidence (Paliath et al., 2023).

The strategies undertaken by non-English freshmen and instructors regarding freshmen's anxiety in ESP speaking program
From the data-collecting process, several themes appeared to answer the second research topic of this study. The themes gathered from interviews and observations are further explained and discussed. Table 4 shows the summary of

various strategies adopted by non-English freshmen to cope with anxiety. In addition, table 5 summarizes several strategies implemented by

ESP instructors to help freshmen minimize their anxiety.

Table 4. *Strategies adopted by non-English freshmen to overcome speaking anxiety*

Name	Preparation and Practice	Positive Thinking	Connect with Peers	Out of Class Exposure to English	Avoid Eye Contact
Freshman 1	✓	-	-	✓	✓
Freshman 2	-	✓	-	✓	-
Freshman 3	✓	-	-	-	✓
Freshman 4	✓	✓	-	-	-
Freshman 5	✓	-	-	-	-
Freshman 6	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Freshman 7	-	✓	-	-	-
Freshman 8	-	✓	✓	-	-

Preparation and practice
Findings indicate that freshmen's prior preparation and practice constitute an effective method to ease their sense of anxiety. It could boost their confidence and enable them to speak up better during class. Some of them expressed,

"In my way, I need to learn and practice speaking English at least a week before the presentation." (Freshman 3)

"My strategy is to practice speaking English more often. For example, before a presentation. I have to prepare the text and read it over and over again." (Freshman 5)

"I should have more preparation to understand the material, so I do not get nervous." (Freshman 6)

"I often simulate presentations in advance before the speaking class." (Freshman 1)

"I usually prepare the script for speaking by choosing the easily understandable topic and sentences." (Freshman 4)

As shown on the transcript, freshmen's strategy to overcome speaking anxiety is to prepare well and then practice it before performing in speaking English. Preparation and practice are often labeled as behavior strategy, reflecting the behavioral pattern of training a target language that helps improve learning outcomes. By applying these strategies, learners could anticipate themselves getting ready for the language class. Rahmi & Murtafi'ah (2022) also proved that time devoted to speaking preparation was substantially linked to thought content and improved speech delivery. Besides, Fitriah & Muna (2019) said that one of the things that led to trouble speaking was not being prepared

beforehand for what would be learned in class. Learners admitted that they would feel more nervous about presenting the material when they did not prepare and practice it well before the presentation day (Muthmainnah, 2018). More sufficient their preparation and practice, the more low anxious feeling they felt.

Positive thinking
The researchers discovered through observation that despite experiencing anxiety, freshmen attempt to appreciate learning, remain optimistic, and not take things too seriously. They try to keep expressing opinions even though they start stuttering in the middle of the sentences delivering, but they try to display their best confidently. Below is an excerpt from several freshmen that are using this strategy,

"I normally keep speaking even if the vocabulary is inappropriate." (Freshman 4)

"Hmm… I try to be innocent, do not mind the surroundings. Just talking and keep it up." (Freshman 7)

"Just do not care with the mistakes, it is okay if incorrect… we are still learning." (Freshman 2)

"I do not think about grammar when speaking; it causes more distraction; just maintain to think positive." (Freshman 8)

Looking at the three statements above, freshmen choose to be positive minded to whatever will happen to them when talking. Following a study by Abdurahman & Rizqi (2020), thinking positively is a powerful approach for strengthening students' optimism. It became certainly relevant as they made mistakes amid speaking performance. Students dislike

contemplating too much about their faults or feeling bad since it would only ruin their speaking performance. Hussain., (2021) state that such a strategy aims at easing anxiety during speaking in learners by turning their focus away from hard times toward positive and soothing stimuli. Applying positive thinking as a coping mechanism entails that students employ cognitive processes to maintain a hopeful and confident mindset while undertaking a task (Abdurahman & Rizqi, 2020; Taly & Paramasivam, 2020).

Connect with peers
First-year university students face an intricate transitioning stage. They must cope with the complex subject matter while shifting toward a novel social environment. In this case, forming a good connection with classmates can be crucial in managing anxiety challenges in speaking settings. Two of the participants declared,

> "By trying to connect and adapt with the classmates, makes me feel more relaxed when having to perform speaking." (Freshman 6)

> "As a new college student, we need to know each other first, so it is not awkward when practicing a foreign language." (Freshman 8)

To enjoy learning, freshmen have to enjoy the environment. In this context, it is the people around them or their classmates. The excerpt shows that the more freshmen connect with their peers, the more relaxed they will perform in the classroom. Referring to this study outcome, Zander & Hohne (2021) believe that adapting to new peer networks in class can create opportunities for social interaction among students, fulfill their fundamental need to belong, and help them cope with stressful situations. Having more chit-chat with classmates and knowing them closer could lower anxiety since students are no longer in a class full of strangers (Karpovich et al., 2021).

Out of class exposure to English
Learners require more exposure to the target language than typically provided in L2 class to obtain a rich vocabulary since self-learning could maximize formal learning. The interview results revealed that two freshmen gained vocabulary input from out-of-class settings by using social media, and watching films. They shared,

> "Listen to anything in English context more

often, like watching film… to shape our English skills." (Freshman 1)

> "I joined the telegram forum and interacted in English. I like the topic discussed in that forum, such as games and comics." (Freshman 2)

The verbatim statements above have exemplified how freshmen received English input in various contexts. The omnipresence of the internet in today's society has provided English language learners with various options for L2 learners to absorb linguistic elements without explicit formal teaching. English can be found in numerous authentic contexts and has been blended across many people's everyday activities; for example, playing video games, listening to music or podcasts, watching films or YouTube videos with English subtitles, and using other social media. This finding was congruent with the earlier study revealing how exposure to a target language could beneficially influence L2 language acquisition (De Wilde et al., 2020). Exposing students to English culture is crucial for raising their competence level. This objective will be met by using the internet as a reliable and efficient resource for speaking practice outside the classroom. Students can immerse themselves in authentic English content from the native speaker outside the class (Rafada & Madini, 2017; De Wilde et al., 2020).

Avoid eye contact
According to the interview results, several freshmen were more comforting when avoiding straight eye contact while speaking. That sort of way could assist them in feeling less nervous, they said,

> "When speaking in front of the class, do not look at people's eyes. Look at the others to avoid getting nervous." (Freshman 1)

> "In my case, I am not looking at friends; I prefer to look above their heads or at the surroundings like walls." (Freshman 6)

> "When explaining during a presentation…do not face your friends and instructor, rather the media or projector." (Freshman 3)

Based on freshmen 1, 6, and 3 responses, they prefer to look at walls, above people's heads, the projector, and others. They may feel uncomfortable when they start directly at their

eyes. In addition, they may worry that if they look into the people's eyes when talking, everything they are thinking will disappear, and their concentration will be disrupted too. This study's results concur with what Muthmainnah (2018) found; avoiding eye contact is what her participants did to fade their anxious feeling in speaking; this strategy is commonly used by silent students who do not want to be asked or pointed out by the lecturer. Chen et al., (2022) prove that gaze avoidance indicates a fear-relevant feature for anxious individuals in social interaction. Someone who feels anxiety likely will not look into the eyes of others directly to avoid the anxiety they are facing (Muthmainah, 2018; Chen et al., 2022).

Table 5. *Strategies implemented by ESP instructors to alleviate freshmen's speaking anxiety*

Strategies	Instructor A	Instructor B
Attempt to be Understanding and Friendly	-	✓
Use Gamification for Warm-Up Activity	✓	-
Create Group Discussion	✓	✓
Bring A Familiar Topic	✓	✓
Allow Freshmen to Access Machine Translation	✓	✓
Tolerate L1 Use when Needed	✓	✓

Attempt to be understanding and friendly
A first step toward mitigating students' speaking anxiety is spotlighting the instructor's role in language class. Raising the instructor's consciousness is crucial to building a positive relationship with their students. During the interview, the instructor explained,

> "My approach in teaching ESP speaking is to set up a calm interaction between students and me; I try to be understanding and friendly. Certainly, they dare to speak. The essence of teaching speaking is to embrace your students until they get comfortable with us. Giving feedback politely and do not embarrass them in front of the public." (Instructor B)

Instructor B's statement above addresses the freshmen's emotional concerns and acknowledges anxious feelings as legitimate. Moreover, she tries to build freshmen's self-confidence in their foreign language capacity by giving encouragement and positive reinforcement, understanding their condition, and promoting empathy. Concerning this issue, she is careful when giving feedback and correcting freshmen's errors. In consonance with this result, Inada (2021) reported that the significance of a teacher's role in tackling anxiety is even more important than a specific methodology. Learning a foreign language is improved by educators who adopt a nurturing and empathetic approach and employ non-intimidating instructional methods. Additionally, strengthening the emotional bond between teachers and learners will comfort them that they will not be alone while facing their anxiety (Jaya et al., 2022).

Use gamification for warm-up activity
One long-used strategy to generate student participation has been the use of games. Indeed, games have been used for decades and are a common practice in EFL classes at all levels and for various purposes, ranging from building character to decreasing anxiety, whether as opening activities or as part of larger class objectives. During observations, the researcher saw that the instructor employed several kinds of gamification approaches as a warm-up activity, and the game depended on the topic material of that day. The interview session also revealed,

> "Since offline speaking class is allowed again, I can apply various kinds of games for pre-activity; the game should be appropriate to involve all students and construct a vibrant atmosphere." (Instructor A)

Based on instructor A's explanation, she uses gamification for warm-up activity. She considers that gamification can promote freshmen's engagement and enjoyment throughout the activities. In teaching and learning, students encounter various feelings, including anxiety, pleasure, and boredom. The instructor should be accountable for tackling students' anxiousness by creating an exciting environment with less stress. Similarly, Alomari et al., (2019) found that gamification can create a fun situation among students, increasing their interest and motivation. Despite the positive effect of gamification; (enthusiasm & engagement), some challenges need to be addressed. For example, some students require more time to understand the game rules (Roy & Zaman, 2018). Therefore, instructors need to select a suitable gamification intervention

that easily understands by learners.

Create group discussion
Both instructors, A and B, clearly revealed their interest in using peer or group discussion to help freshmen of a non-English major deal with their speaking anxiety. They assume that group work can help achieve the goal of anxiety reduction and foster speaking ability. Based on chronological observation data from several meetings, instructors A and B create group discussions by dividing freshmen in the speaking class into small groups. Then give instructions to practice speaking English with their peers in a group based on the given topic. In line with the result of the interview transcripts, they expressed,

> "Daily, I often use group discussion. So, each student still has to speak, but the presentation is in small groups. Instead of talking to the instructor, talking to their peers would be more enjoyable." (Instructor A)

> "Peer discussion, pair discussion, focus group discussion is very useful. Sometimes, I try to make the discussion in the group more exciting. For example, they were CEOs, and they had to present their product, which is in the group. Thus, they do not feel burdened and can work collaboratively." (Instructor B)

Having stated this, using group work seems to be an excellent strategy to boost students' confidence and create a learning classroom community that allows them to control their communication activities, thus reducing anxiety and smoothing the progress of fluency. Topcu & Basbay (2020) proclaim that group work enables learners to have a stress-free atmosphere since they can feel more secure using English personally with their peers and allows for more practice in an active learning process. Moreover, Liu (2018) mentioned that classroom discussions stimulate deep thought and energize unmotivated learners so that everyone benefits from the lesson as they exchange ideas. When working together, the differences in linguistic proficiency allow learners to address each other's questions and provide explanations to be perceived by other learners. The advantage goes both ways; the learner who raises the question will get a response, and the learner who responds to the question will have positive memory reinforcement by teaching it to his or her peers (Zulfikar, 2022).

Bring a familiar topic
Since anxiety has a negative impact on EFL learners' verbal ability, familiarity with speaking topics could be considered to reduce learners' anxiety. During the third classroom observation, the researcher noticed that instructor A conducted a focus group discussion and brought authentic context about "Kanjuruhan Tragedy" for speaking. As the deep sorrow becomes the latest hot news, the freshmen are familiar with this tragic football tragedy so they can share their views regarding this case in English. Completed by interview data, they stated,

> "If the topic is familiar, it can encourage the freshmen to speak more… that is why using old handbook is somehow too rigid. So, I often improve on the topic." (Instructor B)

> "Commonly, in ESP speaking class… I often make my own material that suits freshmen's capacity, and they are also familiar with it. I urge them to do more practice and not need a handbook." (Instructor A)

As expressed by both instructors, selecting interesting and familiar topics is another crucial factor in their strategies to boost freshmen's vocal ability. When freshmen have enough knowledge about a topic, they are keener to talk about it in English. Their longer sentences likely resulted from the prior background knowledge, leading them to elaborate in oral explanations and make relevant connections. In the same vein, Kazemi & Zarei (2015) study also shows that topic familiarity makes statistically significant contributions to effective oral production. The more learners are familiar with the subject matter, the more they can speak. Hence, in order to prevent learners from remaining passive, it is recommended that teachers provide topic-related vocabulary through accessible information (Shakoor, 2020).

Allow freshmen to access machine translation
In today's age, learners and teachers easily and freely benefit from various online tools. Machine translators like google translate are learners' most frequently referred online tools. Along observations, commonly before classroom presentations, freshmen are often given time for preparation. During those times, the instructors allow freshmen to use any machine translator to assist them in doing the task. Further, they stated,

"Frequently, when I ask one of the freshmen in the group to speak, the other members are still typing on Google translate to make the text they want to deliver sounds good and smooth, and I am fine with it." (Instructor A)

"I allow the freshmen to access google translate in each speaking meeting; otherwise, they will find it difficult to speak." (Instructor B)

Regarding the transcripts above, instructors admit that translation is indispensable to studying a foreign language. Machine translation can help low-proficiency students rapidly shift their idea to oral output by giving them a script they can use to participate in speaking class actively. Several previous studies discussed the benefits and drawbacks of using google translate (Alsalem, 2019; Gumartifa et al., 2022). The good part is that it helps language learners produce translation quickly, freely, and easily. Otherwise, the consequence of adopting this technology is that the system frequently generates irrelevant translations and poor grammar accuracy. Google translate could not translate contextually and accurately all the words in the paragraph. Therefore, educators should remain students with distinct solutions to resolve the inaccurate output from A.I. translators. Students can apply their background knowledge to ensure its outcome and eliminate some words error from the translation result (Gumartifa et al., 2022).

Tolerate L1 use when needed
Students with a low English communicative level could only express a few thoughts. Thus, an instructor has to be tolerant of particular L1 usage. As observed from the observation, during the speaking session in a small group, most freshmen tend to switch to their L1 occasionally, especially when encountering difficult words. On the other hand, at a certain moment, the instructors also use code-mixing to provide precise elucidation on a specific form of the target language. As revealed in the interview, the instructors reported,

"If the freshmen forget certain vocabulary, I tolerate them mixing with Indonesia; I will not interrupt them. They would not feel judged if we did not interrupt in the middle of their speaking performance." (Instructor B)

"If I find freshmen who are passive or rarely talk, I let them speak whatever they want. If they cannot express themselves in English,

using Indonesia is fine. I also try to help, guide, and inform the correct vocabularies to use." (Instructor A)

When a freshman cannot recall the comparable form of a word in the target language, both instructors permit them to speak in their mother tongue. Using L1 is an inevitable truth in the L2 program; this strategy can rule out anxiety barriers. In line with this, Abid (2020) highlighted that the intentional use of a specific first language (L1) could help alleviate cognitive pressure and feelings of anxiety when dealing with complex material and concepts. As the study by Joyce et al., (2021) suggests, the students who seek L1 assistance tend to exhibit lower levels of proficiency and tolerance for ambiguity. The incorporation of L1 by language instructors confirms the students' understanding, shedding light on the instruction and offering advice in the classroom. With regard to this matter, students are less anxious once they clearly grasp classroom procedures.

CONCLUSION
The presence of speaking anxiety in learning a foreign language is a vital issue and often results in decreasing oral performance. It is strongly linked with uneasiness that discourages students from speaking the target language. From the overall finding and discussion above, non-English freshmen suffer anxiety over ESP speaking program, mainly because of personal mentality, linguistic capability, and classroom activity. Some share similar reasons for anxiety, such as nervousness and getting blank, limited vocabulary knowledge, fear of presentation and negative evaluation. However, the anxiety they face cannot simply be eliminated overall, but it still can be reduced through various strategies, as done by the freshmen. Furthermore, ESP instructors are imperative to assist the freshmen in providing proper guidance and support to enable them to raise self-belief in acquiring English speaking skills. They share several approaches to alleviating non-English freshmen's anxiety in speaking English, such as being friendly, using gamification, creating group work, bringing familiar topics, allowing machine translation access, and tolerating L1 use. The instructor's various actions and activities could help freshmen to present themselves in the target language.

As a final remark and summary, instructors and freshmen need to participate in what they can

contribute to lessening speaking anxiety. Considering that speaking skill is often accountable for how well one learns a language, designing meaningful language learning takes plenty of effort and practice. The strategies validated in this study are expected to have practical implications for English language teaching. Concerning the study's limitations, recruiting only a handful of participants indicates that the outcomes could not be broadly applicable elsewhere. However, it provides advice regarding set-up anxiety free language classrooms for educators in the associated fields. Thus, it is recommended that future researchers investigate an array of activities or solutions offered by this study and their impact on learners over time to give grand educators and researchers more profound insight into anxiety strategies. Exploring the sources of language anxiety at the other education level with the rest of English skills, such as writing, listening, and reading, is another interesting research area to contribute more knowledge and understanding in the literature.

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